

ANIMAL-VEHICLE CRASHES

West Virginia's wildlife population is a great resource for our State; however, for many West Virginia motorists it can be a daily threat to life and property. In recent years, the number of auto related accidents involving deer and other wildlife has sky-rocketed. This is largely due to human encroachment and increases in deer population. At the same time, transportation networks have become more extensive with increased speed limits. Therefore, it is important to **Watch Out** for West Virginia Wildlife!

In 2003, the West Virginia Insurance Commission conducted a study of the top auto insurers who had 5% or more of the State market. The study focused on deer-vehicle crashes, and the findings were significant. In fact, West Virginia led neighboring states in the total number of claims. Over 28,000 deer-vehicle claims were presented to the top insurers. The average claim was over **\$1,600**. When the numbers were totaled, over **\$44 million** in comprehensive claims had been paid out by insurers annually. Actual costs may be even higher because the figures do not include claims where vehicles were damaged after drivers veered to miss a deer and ended up in a ditch or hitting a tree.

Deer-vehicle claims represent nearly 30% of all comprehensive auto losses in West Virginia. Therefore, it is important to stay aware, alert, and awake.

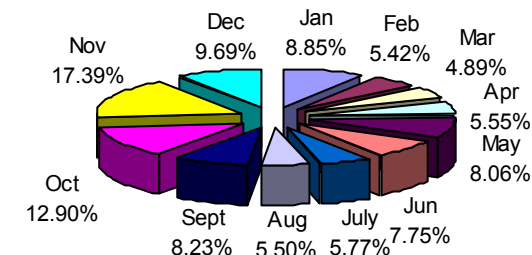


CRASH PRECAUTIONS

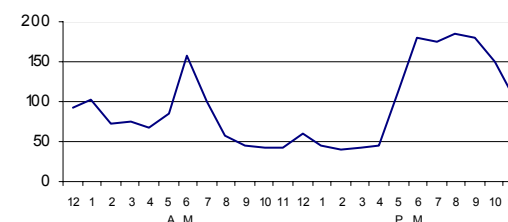
- Be aware of deer crossing signs, they are placed there for good reason. Deer are creatures of habit and typically travel established feeding paths.
- Most deer-related crashes **occur on two-lane roads between dusk and dawn**.
- Deer tend to move in groups. If you see one, there are likely to be more.
- The daily number of deer-vehicle crashes in West Virginia increase dramatically in **October, November, and December**. This trend coincides directly with both the hunting season and mating season.
- Stay **ALERT!**
- Always wear a **SEAT BELT!**
- **DO NOT** rely on deer whistles or high-beam headlights to deter deer. There is no published research that verifies deer whistles are effective.
- **Striking the deer is usually the safest action to take.** Motorists making evasive maneuvers are typically involved in a more serious crash. If a collision seems inevitable, hit the deer while maintaining full control of your vehicle.
- After dark, deer are usually visible from less than 200 feet. Under optimum conditions, it takes a typical car, traveling at 55 miles per hour, over 300 feet to stop.
- **DO NOT** remove the deer from the road side unless you are absolutely certain it is dead. There are many true stories of deer awakening in the backs of vehicles and posing a second threat to the lives of the passengers. Contact the nearest police authority for assistance.

AVOID PEAK CRASH PERIODS

2002 DEER-VEHICLE CRASHES BY MONTH



2002 DEER-VEHICLE CRASHES BY TIME OF DAY



* The above information provided by the WV DOT

Annual Deer – Crash Statistics by Various States

State	# of Licensed Drivers	DVC's	DVC's / Driver
WV	1.3 M	28K	1/47
MI	10	67	1/103
PA	8.2	44	1/186
OH	8.2	27	1/303

* DVC=Deer-Vehicles Crash

* 2002 Reporting Year

West Virginia Facts and State Symbols

West Virginia was given statehood status with the "agreement" the citizens would phase out slavery. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln approved the Statehood Bill for West Virginia. West Virginia was proclaimed a state on April 20, 1863, with the Bill becoming effective 60 days later, June 20, 1863.

When West Virginia first entered statehood, there were only 46 counties. That same year, four other counties voted themselves into West Virginia. Today, there are 55 counties in the Mountain State. The oldest county in the state is Hampshire County formed in 1754 as part of Virginia. The youngest county is Mingo formed in 1895. The smallest county is Hancock located in the northern panhandle of the state with Randolph being the largest.

When the Legislature convened for its first session, there were only 47 members of the House of Delegates and 18 members of the State Senate. Through the years, the number has increased to 100 members of the House and 34 members of the State Senate.



Black Bear - West Virginia's State Animal. The Black Bear was selected as West Virginia's official State Animal by a poll of students, teachers and sportsman conducted by the Division of Natural Resources in 1954-1955. It was officially adopted by the Legislature during the 1973 Regular Session.



Cardinal - West Virginia's State Bird. The cardinal was named the state's official bird with the adoption of House Resolution 12 on March 7, 1949, which authorized children from public schools and civic organizations to name the state bird.



Rhododendron - West Virginia's State Flower. With the recommendation of the Governor and a vote by public school students, the Legislature adopted House Joint Resolution 19 on January 29, 1903, naming the Rhododendron the official state flower.



Sugar Maple - West Virginia's State Tree. The adoption of House Resolution 12 on March 7, 1949, authorized a vote by public school pupils and civic organizations to choose the official state tree.



The West Virginia Insurance Commission is here to serve you!

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Please contact our Consumer Service's Hotline at 1-800-642-9004 for any questions you have regarding insurance related issues or see our website at:

www.wvinsurance.gov



West Virginia Wildlife Watch For It! Animal-Vehicle Crash Information



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